United Nations

Press Release

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council to take up situation in Liberia tomorrow.

+ President of Security Council receives further letters from members of military coalition against Iraq.

+ Security Council President informs Iraqi Ambassador of various consultations held with Council members.

+ International relief agencies continue to prepare for an estimated million and a half evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait.

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A United Nations official said today that the Security Council President, Bagbeni A. Nzengeya (Zaire), was holding bilateral consultations with a representative of the United States. The Council President was also expected to receive the Ecuadorian Ambassador in his capacity as Co-ordinator of the Non-Aligned Caucus in the Council.

The official said the President had indicated that, in addition to the question of the Persian Gulf, he was also discussing the question of consultations on the situation in Liberia. Subjects to be covered would include the possibility of Council support for the transitional Government in Liberia and humanitarian assistance to that country.

It was later announced that the Council would hold consultations on Liberia at 11 a.m. tomorrow, to be followed by a formal meeting.

Among the letters addressed to the Council President and made available as documents today, one from United States Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering stated that his country strongly preferred a peaceful resolution of the Gulf crisis, but that Saddam Hussein had rejected all diplomatic efforts and had continued to defy the will of the Security Council and the community of nations.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The letter stated that the purpose of the military actions was the liberation of Kuwait, not the destruction, occupation or dismemberment of Iraq. The actions were directed strictly at military and strategic targets and every effort had been made to minimize civilian casualties. The United States hoped the actions would be concluded as soon as possible consistent with the full implementation of Security Council resolutions and the restoration of international peace and security in the area.

A similar letter from the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Samir S. Shihabi, stated that the military operations for the liberation of Kuwait had commenced on 16 January because Saddam Hussein had rejected all efforts, appeals and endeavours and had also rejected international law calling for his withdrawal from Kuwait.

A letter from the Ambassador of Yugoslavia, Darko Silovic, the current Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, stated that all sides involved in the Gulf crisis should reflect once again upon the "enormous dangers" of a war and its "disastrous consequences". Yugoslavia appealed to the Iraqi President to act in favour of peace, in the interest of Iraq and the Iraqi people. The letter said Yugoslavia fully supported the Secretary-General's recent statement and his efforts for peace.

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The President of the Security Council, Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya (Zaire), has informed Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al-Anbari of various consultations he has had with Council members and also of various ideas put forward to contribute to a solution of the Persian Gulf crisis.

At a meeting on Saturday, the Council President mentioned to Ambassador Al-Anbari separate proposals by Algeria, India and the Soviet Union. The Iraqi Ambassador undertook to convey those ideas to his Government in Baghdad although he stressed the difficulty he had communicating with his capital.

The Council President continued his consultations on Saturday, in particular with the spokesman for the Non-Aligned Group, Ambassador Jose Ayala Lasso of Ecuador.

On Friday afternoon, the Council President told correspondents that he deplored the Iraqi missile attack Thursday night on Israel. Israel was not concerned in the war and should not be attacked by Iraq, he said.

The Council President expressed surprise that Iraq had attacked Israel, well knowing that all the allied forces in the Gulf were now implementing the 12 Council resolutions on Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Israel was not involved in the Gulf crisis and had, since the start of the crisis, kept a low profile.

Asked about a proposal by Algeria for mediation, he said the Council was still exploring with Algeria "all means and ways to accelerate" the peace process in the region. He said the Council was discussing ways to convince

Saddam Hussein -- in spite of the war -- to give up and withdraw his forces from Kuwait.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar told the press Friday night that a Soviet peace initiative, sent in a message by President Mikhail Gorbachev to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, had not been sent through the United Nations.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar said that, only if the Soviet approach to Iraq was successful, would the Organization be involved. He added that, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, he would like to see peace as soon as possible.

Asked about his consultations with the five permanent Council members on Friday, the Secretary-General replied that he had met with four of them separately to discuss the Gulf situation. Mr. Perez de Cuellar indicated that other subjects had also been on the agenda for discussion.

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International relief agencies continue to prepare for an estimated million and a half evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait.

The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) said in its latest situation report that supplies had been sent to Egypt, and that agreement had been reached with the Jordanian Government for transit camps to be set up in Jordan to assist 100,000 people fleeing from the war. The Jordanian Government confirmed that the border would remain open, as would the airport, despite the fact that international airlines have suspended flights to the country. According to UNDRO, the World Food Programme has food stocks in the country to cover the needs of 450,000 people for one month.

The Disaster Relief Office further said plans were under way for transit camps for about 35,000 people in Syria to be equipped by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The UNDRO also reported that the Iraqi Government continued to keep the border with Turkey closed, and that there was no reliable information on evacuees wishing to cross from Iraq into that country.

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